

Posted June 18, 2020

Read Ephesians 5.15–21 in your favorite translation. I will print the NET–2 translation.

15 Therefore consider carefully how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 taking advantage of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 For this reason do not be foolish, but be wise by understanding what the Lord’s will is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, which is debauchery, but be filled by the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your hearts to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 and submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

COMMENTS:

Our reading today is short but invites us to do some very serious thinking. I have discovered that many people don’t face reality in their life plan. The first time I became aware of this was when my wife and I planned a trip to Oberammergau and the Passion Play way back in 1970.

A number of our personal friends (and fellow parents) asked what we had done to get ready for the trip. I confessed that we had finally gotten around to getting our Will prepared. Several of them said, “Oh, that’s morbid.” I had felt foolish that we waited that long to do so.

I pointed out that the primary reason was because I wanted to be sure who would raise our children if something should ever happen to both of us (not just on a European trip). Under the laws of our land, you have the privilege of selecting that person or persons. We both wanted to be sure that it would be someone who was Christian and shared our values.

If we not taken advantage of that legal opportunity, some friendly social worker who may not share our values and faith would select the new parents. Plus the children would have been caught in limbo for a period of time. That would make adjustments all the harder.

My dad had always stressed, death is a part of life. The only thing we don’t know is when it will come. It may come in youth or it may come in old age or anywhere in between. Planning wisely for that circumstance is important.

We chose a pastor friend and his wife at that time. After they ended up with six children of their own, we decided they might have enough to deal with in their own family and so we found another Christian couple who consented to serve .

I had a mother who was killed in an accident at age 24 and a father who lived to be 90. Your life plan has to include those whom you might have to care for in the future, such as a handicapped mate, aging parent, or an injured child, etc.

Verse 16 reminds us we are to take advantage of every opportunity. I know how blessed I was to know that I was going to be a pastor from childhood. I never struggled with a career choice. I know many who have. I even had classmates at the seminary who got to graduation and were still not certain if they were supposed to be a pastor.

If God does not give you a clear indication of the path he has chosen, consult family and friends for guidance. Sometimes others see us more accurately than we see ourselves. Just keep knocking on the doors of life to see which ones God will open up for you.

Next Paul warns how easily our desires and appetites can assume control of your life. We know there are many addictions beyond alcohol and drugs. Don't leave your life empty. Have it filled with the right stuff. Go read Jesus' warning in Luke 11:24–26 about this.

We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit and surrounding ourselves with the fellow Christians. We need to speak and sing of the Lord to one another. We also need to encourage one another. All of life gets lonely at times. You can't encourage others by tearing people down.

God even commands us here to sing and make music in our hearts to the Lord. Unless you have a medical condition prohibits you from singing, you should never sit silent when the congregation is singing. Use the voice God gave you to thank him for all he has give you in the name of Jesus.

Then we come to the real difficult crunch of the Christian life, submitting to one another because of our respect for Christ. Many pastors have had brides say they do not want that reading about wives submitting to their husbands (Ephesians 5:22–33, esp. vs. 22–24) read or included in the Marriage Service.

We are having a problem today with those who resist wearing masks in this pandemic. They want to protect their rights. I believe God wants us to protect each other from a serious disease. The fights over who is in charge in a marriage are destructive to the relationship. As long as you are not being asked to sin, yielding to one another won't hurt you.

Obeying the powers that be does infringe on my freedom. Yielding to the leadership of Christ does not infringe on my freedom. It gives me a change to show and declare a love like God has shown to me. God says you are not doing it to please an ordinary person, you are doing it to honor your Redeemer and Savior, Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION QUESTION: Two words we almost all resist are submit and obey. Our desire to protect ourselves takes over. I know a child who did not want to cooperate with the teacher unless he liked the teacher. If he did not like the teacher he would resist obeying and following orders on assignments, etc. If you were the pastor and a bride asked you not to use or quote the words of God in Ephesians 5, what would you say to her? This might help you to understand why you resist the word submit in the Scriptures.